

Professionalism Level of Agricultural Extension in Karo and Samosir Regency

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ABSTRACT

Professionalism is a person competent at work, trusted, has character, is ethical, communicative, and can work together. Professional agricultural extension is required to have good abilities, namely character, conceptual, technical, contextual, communication, adaptive, anticipatory, and cooperative. The aim is to determine the level of professionalism of agricultural extension workers. The professionalism of agricultural extension from four perspectives, namely (1) philosophical orientation; (2) development orientation; (3) characteristic orientation and (4) non-traditional orientation. The research sample was agricultural extension workers in Karo and Samosir regency. The number of research samples is 174 extension workers. The data is presented in a frequency and percentage table with categories 1 to 3. Categorization is based on the value of the mean interval and standard deviation of each sub-variable, namely: low category, medium category and high category. The result is that the level of professionalism of the extension workers is (1) the philosophical orientation sub-variable has a value in the high category of 44.3%; (2) the development orientation sub variable has a moderate category value of 46%; (3) the characteristic orientation sub variable has a low category value of 45%, and (4) the non-traditional orientation sub-variable has a low category value of 47%.

Keywords: Agricultural, Agricultural extension, Karo regency, Samosir regency Professionalism.

INTRODUCTION

The agricultural sector has an important role in the Indonesian economy. The agricultural sector contributes to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) after the manufacturing and trading industries. In 2019, the added value and production level of the Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries sector reached Rp. 1.354 trillion or 12.4 percent of the national GDP (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2020). Agriculture is the main livelihood of rural life (World Bank, 2021). The development of the agricultural sector stimulates the national and rural economies by increasing incomes, food security, and living standards. Agricultural production remains the main source of livelihood for most rural communities. The agricultural sector is very important because it directly affects the country's economy, employment opportunities, food security, and technological development (Abba *et al.*, 2018).

Pakpahan (2017), agricultural extension provides knowledge, skills, and consulting services to farmers to increase agricultural productivity. Agricultural development in many countries depends on the effective and dynamic extension (Pakpahan, 2018). Mahaliyanaarachchi and Bandara (2006), Agricultural extension workers should assist, guide and direct farmers to identify agricultural and non-agricultural activities that can increase farmers' income. Agricultural extension workers play an important role in the implementation of agricultural extension activities. The success of agricultural extension activities will be seen in the behavior of farmers, where there is an increase in the knowledge, attitudes, and skills of farmers (Nona dan Sagajoka, 2021). The success of the implementation of agricultural extension is known from the satisfaction of farmers with the performance of the implementation of agricultural extension (Nona & Juniasih, 2020). Inefficient and unsatisfactory performance of extension services and services will affect the success of extension activities (Pakpahan, 2015). Farmers complain about poor extension activities where extension workers are not trained in innovation, extension workers are said to be less responsive to the needs of farmers, less able to communicate with farmers, have a poor work ethic, prone to errors and spreading the wrong message and the government is less supportive in terms of funding for implementation. Extension activities affect the success of the implementation of counseling (Obiora & Emordi, 2013; Anaeto, *et al.*, 2015). Reforms are carried out in extension activities as an effort to overcome the problems that exist in extension. Policy framework for professional extension activities involving accreditation, certification to improve competence, good work ethic, integrity, accountability (Olorunfem dan Oladele, 2021).

The fact is that most of the problems in extension activities are the lack of professional extension workers in carrying out extension activities. The author is interested in knowing the level of professionalism of agricultural extension workers in Karo and Samosir districts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Agricultural extension workers are specialists employed by the government to provide information, knowledge, skills, training to farmers so that their production increases (Pakpahan, 2018). Extension workers need to pay attention to the uniqueness of each working area, including the uniqueness in the socio-cultural aspects of the community so that the extension programs and activities carried out can run well and provide good

results for farmers (Vintarno *et al.*, 2019). The difficulties experienced by farmers during the implementation of extension activities are that the extension materials are sometimes not suitable for the actual situation and the level of agricultural production power is small. Agricultural extension activities aim to change the main character and business workers by increasing their insight, expertise, behavior and encouraging them to be more independent and also open to the use of technology (Alam & Oktavianti, 2020).

Professionalism is obtained from the right competence and qualifications in carrying out their duties. Professionalism to improve the image, promote credibility and accountability in the extension profession, regulate the professional behavior of extension workers and ensure the competence of extension workers through the accreditation of recognized and credible professional bodies. Accreditation and certification are all processes that ensure extension workers have met the specified educational standards, passed qualifying examinations, met the minimum experience. This means that everyone who carries out agricultural extension activities and consulting services needs to demonstrate the attributes of professionalism (Terblanche, 2015). The legal basis for the professionalism of extension workers, namely: (a) Law Number 13 of 2003 concerning Manpower; (b) Government Regulation Number 23 of 2004 concerning the national professional certification body; (c) Decree of the Coordinating Minister for the Supervision of Development and Utilization of State Apparatus (MENKOWASBANGPAN) Number: PER/02/MENPAN/2/2008 concerning Functional Positions of Agricultural Extension Officers and their Credit Scores; (d) Regulation of the Minister of Agriculture Number 45/Permentan/OT.140/4/2013 concerning Guidelines for the Implementation of Agricultural Extension Professional (Rokhedi, 2014).

Extension workers need to understand the constraints, both cultural and structural, which are caused, among other things, by the diversity of agricultural extension institutions at various levels, biased perceptions and understandings, and declining professionalism of extension workers (Vintarno *et al.*, 2019).

It was concluded that the professionalism of extension workers refers to the policy and structure of extension activities; certified extension workers; accredited extension agency; knowledge, skills, and expertise are characterized by norms, values, and regulations; integrity, competence, and ethical behavior.

RESEARCH METHOD

The study was conducted in the Lake Toba area in Karo Regency and Samosir Regency. This research is quantitative. The research sample was agricultural extension workers in Karo and Samosir regency. The number of research samples in the 2 districts is 174 extension workers. The data is presented in a frequency and percentage table with categories 1 to 3. Categorization is based on the value of the mean interval and standard deviation of each sub-variable, namely:

Low category = $< (\bar{X} + \sigma) - 1$

Medium category = $((\bar{X} + \sigma) - 1) \sim ((\bar{X} + \sigma) + 1)$

High category = $> (\bar{X} + \sigma) + 1$

RESULTS

Gilley dan Enggland (1989), The professionalism of agro-tourism instructors can be seen from four perspectives, namely 1) philosophical orientation with approaches from certification, accreditation licenses, instructor attitudes, individual freedom, public

services, rules, work procedures, extension methods, extension concepts, system development, academic thinking. 2) development orientation with the approach of professional associations, extension organizations; 3) characteristic orientation with a certain knowledge approach, academic requirements, and code of ethics and 4) non-traditional orientation, namely special skills and competencies. The distribution of respondents based on the sub-variables of professional extension workers can be explained in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of respondents based on sub variables of Extension Professionalism

Sub Variable	Score	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Philosophical Orientation	1. ≤130	Low	46	26,4
	2.130,1-132	Medium	51	29,3
	3.>132	High	77	44,3
	Total		174	100
Development Orientation	1. ≤ 16	Low	38	21,8
	2. 16,1-17,9	Medium	80	46
	3. >18	High	56	32,2
	Total		174	100
Characteristic Orientation	1. ≤ 20	Low	78	45
	2. 20,1-21,9	Medium	72	41,3
	3. > 22	High	24	13,7
	Total		174	100
Nontraditional Orientation	1. ≤ 20	Low	83	47
	2. 20,1-21,9	Medium	74	43
	3. > 22	High	17	10
	Total		174	100

Source: Data processed (2021)

Table 1 shows that the philosophical orientation sub-variable has a value with a low category of 26.4%, a medium category of 29.3%, and a high category of 44.3%. This shows that the professionalism of instructor has a high level of professionalism, especially in the philosophical orientation. The development orientation sub-variable has a value with a low category of 21.8%, a medium category of 46%, and a high category of 32.2%. This shows that the professionalism of the instructor is at a moderate professional level, especially in development orientation (professional association participation). The characteristic orientation sub-variable has a value with a low category of 45%, a medium category of 41.3%, and a high category of 13.7%. This shows that the professionalism of the instructor at the professional level is low, especially in the orientation of characteristics (special skills and competencies). The non-traditional orientation sub-variable has a value in the low category of 47%, the medium category as much as 43%, and the high category as much as 10%. This shows that the professionalism of extension workers has a low level of professionalism, especially in non-traditional orientations (unique characteristics of extension workers). It was concluded that the level of professionalism of agricultural extension workers in the research area was in the high category.

The frequency of each sub-variable of competence of professional extension workers can be seen in Table 2

Table 2. Frequency of the Sub-Variable of Extension Professionalism

Sub variabel/Variabel	Category								Total	
	1		2		3		4		F	%
Philosophical Orientation	60	34,5	72	41,2	31	18	11	6,3	174	100
Development Orientation	54	31,3	79	45,5	32	17,8	9	5,4	174	100
Characteristic Orientation	55	32	75	43	33	18,4	11	6,6	174	100
Nontraditional Orientation	61	35	74	41,8	32	18,4	8	4,8	174	100

Source: Data processed (2021)

Information:

Category 1 = Unprofessional

Category 2 = Less professional

Category 3 = Professional

Category 4 = Very professional

Table 2 frequency of the sub-variable of extension professionalism is the philosophical orientation in category one as much as 34.5%, in category 2 as much as 41.2%, in category 3 as much as 18%, and in category 4 as much as 6.3%.

DISCUSSION

Professional development of agricultural extension requires professional certification of agricultural extension. Certification for agricultural extension aims to improve the process and quality of work results, increase professionalism, and determine the feasibility of agro-tourism instructors in carrying out their duties. The condition in the field is that not all extension workers get the opportunity to take part in certification, even some extension workers say that the certification received has not shown that the extension worker can be said to be professional.

Extension activities are regulated by Minister of Agriculture Regulation Number 03/Permentan/SM.200/1/2018 concerning Guidelines for the Implementation of Agricultural Extension on January 11, 2018. Extension licenses such as the Professional Certification Institute (LSP) which have obtained a license from the National Professional Certification Agency (BNSP) center. Empowering extension workers through professional certification of extension workers, technical guidance, and training to improve quality. Efforts to print agricultural extension are carried out through vocational education. Field results show that the license that the extension worker knows is the one that handles the certification and training that the extension worker will take part in. BPP accreditation is needed to ensure that the implementation of extension services in the sub-district is guaranteed to run effectively and efficiently and is able to coordinate, synergize and harmonize agricultural development programs in the sub-district with other stakeholders. Study Olorunfem dan Oladele (2021), educate and train extension workers on professionalization by ensuring institutions in the agricultural extension sector as competent, accountable, and efficient rural consulting and services. Results in the field that BPP has not been accredited.

Extension workers have a positive attitude towards their work and like the profession as extension workers because as extension workers they have the freedom to develop creativity and do not depend on others (independent). Extension workers are happy and happy when they receive recognition from the local government where their main duties and functions are listed in the Regional Regulation.

The results showed that public services related to farming information about business funds, production facilities, the latest cultivation methods that can be applied at affordable prices, post-harvest handling, and marketing. Extension officers have carried out outreach activities by established procedures.

The method used in extension activities is adjusted based on materials and media that are by the characteristics of agriculture farmers. The methods that are often used in extension activities are lecture, exhibition, discussion, and demonstration methods.

Table 2 shows the gradual development orientation of category one as much as 31.3%, in category 2 as much as 45.5%, in category 3 as much as 17.8%, and in category 4 as much as 5.4%. Indonesian agricultural extension workers have professional organizations such as Medicine with its IDI, the agricultural extension professional organization is named the Indonesian Agricultural Extension Association (IP2SI). This organization will fight for and guard the great ideals of extension workers throughout Indonesia for the advancement and independence of agriculture and the improvement of the fate of extension workers in the future. The extension organization other than IP2SI is the Indonesian Agricultural Extension Association (PERHIPTANI). Perhiptani aims to support government programs and community activities in realizing a strong and modern agricultural system. The result of this research is that extension workers have more Perhiptani professional organizations because Perhiptani is the official professional organization for agricultural extension workers throughout Indonesia.

Extension education is a bachelor's degree in agriculture, forestry, and veterinary medicine.

Table 2 shows the orientation of the characteristics of category one as much as 32%, in category 2 as much as 43%, in category 3 as much as 18.4%, and in category 4 as much as 6.6%. Support for the implementation of agricultural extension is very much needed, such as support from various parties such as extension agencies, local governments, academics, and business actors (Charina *et al.*, 2018). Extension support for agro-tourism is needed because extension activities are directly related to agro-tourism. A good understanding of the characteristics of farmers' production areas will affect the success of agricultural extension in shaping farmer's behavior (Nona *et al.*, 2018; Prayogha *et al.*, 2018). Management of agro-tourism areas in Karo Regency with Berastagi and Barus Jahe sub-districts with self-picked strawberry garden agro-tourism, Tiga Panah District with own-picked orange orchards, brand regency with Siosar Puncak 2000 agro-tourism, and Dolat Rakyat Regency with Bunga agro-tourism. Agro-tourism management is carried out through farmer groups and tourism awareness groups (Pokdarwis). Extension workers know the terms of implementing the concept of agro-tourism, namely determining cropping patterns, increasing production yields after doing agro-tourism. The role of extension workers is very important in the development of agro-tourism, especially cultivation techniques.

Table 2 shows the non-traditional orientation of category one as much as 35%, in category 2 as much as 41.8%, in category 3 as much as 18.4%, and in category 4 as

much as 4.8%. Agrotourism instructors are also required to have and comply with a code of ethics extension profession. Perhaptani compiles a code of ethics that must be obeyed by all agricultural extension workers under this organization. The code of ethics for agricultural extension later became known as the five ethics of agricultural extension. The five ethics of agricultural instructors are codes of ethics that must be adhered to and obeyed by all agricultural extension containing 5 (five) codes of ethics as follows: 1) Agricultural instructors are faithful and devoted to God Almighty and always respect and treat farmers and their families as equals with themselves.; 2) Agricultural extension always places the wishes and needs of farmers as the main basis for consideration in developing programs; 3) Agricultural extension are always straightforward, sincere and honest in conveying information, suggestions or recommendations and act as motivators, dynamists, facilitators and catalysts in guiding farmers-fishers and their families; 4) Agricultural extension always have dedication and dedication to defend the interests of farmers and fishermen on the basis of truth and in carrying out their duties always show exemplary, harmonious, harmonious and balanced behavior to all parties; and 5) Agricultural extension workers always maintain solidarity and the image of the agricultural extension corps based on the principle of "compassion, foster care, compassion and refinement" and always behave and behave in a manner that respects local religions, beliefs, rules, norms and customs. Guided by the code of ethics, the extension worker has been 'directed' to become a professional. The code of ethics for extension workers is known as the five ethics of agro-tourism instructors and remains under the auspices of the Perhaptani organization.

CONCLUSION

The level of professionalism of the extension workers in the Karo and Samosir districts is (1) the philosophical orientation sub-variable has a value in the high category of 44.3%; (2) the development orientation sub variable has a moderate category value of 46%; (3) the characteristic orientation sub variable has a low category value of 45%, and (4) the non-traditional orientation sub-variable has a low category value of 47%.

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